



# MEMO

January 30, 2026

**TO:** PIBC Board of Directors and Policy & Public Affairs Committee (Board meeting date: January 30, 2026)

**FROM:** Deborah Jensen RPP, MCIP (Chair of RPP Regulation Subcommittee)

**RE:** Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project – Q4 2025 Chair Update

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## PURPOSE

This memo presents the fourth quarterly update on the Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project (the Project), including an update on *Bill M216 Professional Reliance Act*.

## BACKGROUND

In December 2023, the PIBC Board approved direction to undertake outreach and education about the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) and possible opportunities and implications for PIBC and the planning profession. The Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project is intended to achieve the Board direction. The information that is gathered through this Project – through engagement and research – will be presented to the Board through both quarterly reports and a final report. The Board has not made any decisions on whether the planning profession should or should not be regulated under the *Professional Governance Act*.

In November 2024, the PIBC Board endorsed the Phase 1 Work Plan and directed the Chair of the RPP Regulation Subcommittee to provide quarterly updates to the Policy & Public Affairs Committee (PPAC) and the Board. The Board also directed staff to distribute these quarterly reports for information to all PIBC standing and operational committees, and to post on the project webpage. The PIBC Board received the first quarterly update in March 2025.

## WORK PLAN UPDATES

Phase 1 focuses on building up the baseline knowledge of members and offering varied ways for members to engage with the Project. Since the Q3 update, the Subcommittee has successfully steered the completion of the consultant-based strategic assessment work.

### Strategic Assessment of Professional Governance

PIBC retained The Regulator's Practice in August 2025 to undertake a strategic assessment of professional governance in relation to the PGA. The consultant work comprised desktop research, key informant interviews, focus groups, and the integration of the research inputs. The final report is attached separately in the Board agenda.



*Figure 1. General Methodology of the Strategic Assessment Work*

A major component of the work included the focus group sessions, which were completed in the Fall of 2025. A request for participation was issued to the PIBC membership in September, for which we received 93 responses. In the end, 69 members participated in a total of nine focus groups. The majority of participants came from the Okanagan, Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, but also included five planners from the Yukon. Members of the Board and Subcommittee, and staff attended the focus groups as observers.

The focus groups provided an opportunity to hear directly from planners to gauge the level of knowledge about the PGA, and to identify those topics of importance to the membership. They are not unbiased activities, but rather a qualitative research method where participants can express their current points of view. And while the majority of participants indicated a limited knowledge of the PGA, and so comments may not be directly related to the PGA, the fulsome discussion that occurred within the groups showed what the issues are from a 'front line' perspective. The focus groups provided valuable qualitative input to help inform future decisions of the Board regarding the PGA and PIBC initiatives.

Going into the focus groups, several topic areas were identified to help steer the discussion:

- the public interest mandate and prevention of risk of harm to the public;
- reserved practice and what that means for the planning profession;
- changes to government oversight; and
- potential operational changes for PIBC and the impact on members and administration.

While these topics were covered in all groups, some particular areas received more attention than others depending on the interest of the participants and the flow of the conversation. Overall, the participants were very engaged in the discussion and indicated the groups had been a positive experience. A feedback survey was distributed to the focus group participants in January to obtain feedback about their experiences in their focus group. The key findings are attached.

## OTHER SUBCOMMITTEE BUSINESS

As reported elsewhere, the Subcommittee has been the lead committee monitoring and steering PIBC's response to *Bill M216 Professional Reliance Act*. At its meeting on November 28, 2025, the Board received an update on PIBC activities in response to the Bill.

In addition to making a formal submission to the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills, PIBC convened a special virtual lunch and learn on December 18. PIBC was represented by the Board President, President-Elect, and Chair of the RPP Regulation Subcommittee. Guy Patterson RPP, MCIP was an invited presenter to provide the legal interpretation of the Bill. 260 people attended the lunch and learn (out of 401 registrants).

The Select Standing Committee is scheduled to consider Bill M216 on February 2, 2026. Staff will monitor the outcome of the meeting and advise the Subcommittee and Board as appropriate.

*Bill M216* has garnered considerable attention from members and from other external stakeholders. The following is a working list of organizations that have either made an official statement and/or made formal submissions about the Bill:

### Expressed Concerns and/or Opposition

- PIBC
- PGA Regulators
  - Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC
  - Architectural Institute of British Columbia
  - BC Institute of Agrologists
  - College of Applied Biologists
  - Engineers and Geoscientists of BC
  - Forest Professionals BC
- BC Society of Landscape Architects
- Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Lower Mainland Local Government Association
- City of Delta
- City of Coquitlam
- City of White Rock
- City of Langley
- City of Pitt Meadows
- City of Port Moody
- City of New Westminster
- City of Richmond
- District of Squamish
- City of Vernon
- City of Nanaimo
- City of Victoria
- District of Saanich
- District of Central Saanich
- District of Metchosin
- City of Quesnel
- City of Parksville

- Town of View Royal
- Municipality of North Cowichan
- District of Port Hardy
- City of Terrace
- City of Prince George
- Village of Valemount
- Village of Radium Hot Springs
- Town of Osoyoos
- City of Greenwood
- City of Williams Lake
- District of 100 Mile House
- Town of Golden
- Village of Harrison Hot Springs
- Village of Fruitvale
- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
- Regional District of Central Okanagan
- Regional District of North Okanagan
- Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- Metro Vancouver Regional District
- Okanagan Basic Water Board
- BC Nature
- Sunshine Coast Conservation Association
- West Coast Environmental Law
- Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
- Okanagan Basin Water Board

#### Expressed Support

- Urban Development Institute/Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
- Homes for Living
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- Strong Towns Nanaimo

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no new financial implications associated with this Q4 2025 Chair Update.

#### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

A significant amount of work has been completed to date on the Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project. Nine focus groups were convened in Fall 2025 to engage with members and non-members in greater depth about the issues around professional governance. The final report prepared by The Regulator's Practice is presented in a separate memo in this Board agenda, including recommended next steps for further engagement.

In addition, PIBC is monitoring the status of *Bill M216 Professional Reliance Act*. Consultation by the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills closed on January 6, 2026. PIBC made a formal submission in December. The Select Standing Committee is scheduled to meet on February 2, 2026 to deliberate on *Bill M216*.

This quarterly update will be posted online and shared with members in an upcoming PIBC e-news distribution. The next quarterly Chair Update is anticipated at the March 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Jensen RPP, MCIP  
Chair of RPP Regulation Subcommittee

**ATTACHMENT**

Feedback Survey of Focus Group Participants

**REFERENCES**

Project Website (including FAQ, *Planning West* articles, and prior quarterly updates, etc.)  
[www.pibc.bc.ca/professionalgovernance](http://www.pibc.bc.ca/professionalgovernance)

PIBC Submission on *Bill M216*

[https://pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal\\_pages\\_pdfs/news-and-events/PIBC-Letter-to-Select-Standing-Committee\\_FINAL-Signed.pdf](https://pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal_pages_pdfs/news-and-events/PIBC-Letter-to-Select-Standing-Committee_FINAL-Signed.pdf)

Special PIBC Lunch and Learn on *Bill M216*

[https://youtu.be/j4dYCWzwvrY?si=QzW3H-Wmdb\\_dkqUt](https://youtu.be/j4dYCWzwvrY?si=QzW3H-Wmdb_dkqUt)

Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/43rdparliament-1stsession-pbpmb/meetings>

PGA Regulators Joint Submission: <https://www.egbc.ca/getmedia/8615e4fd-a336-4c69-a4e6-084ba4547937/Bill-M216-Committee-Submission-FINAL.pdf>

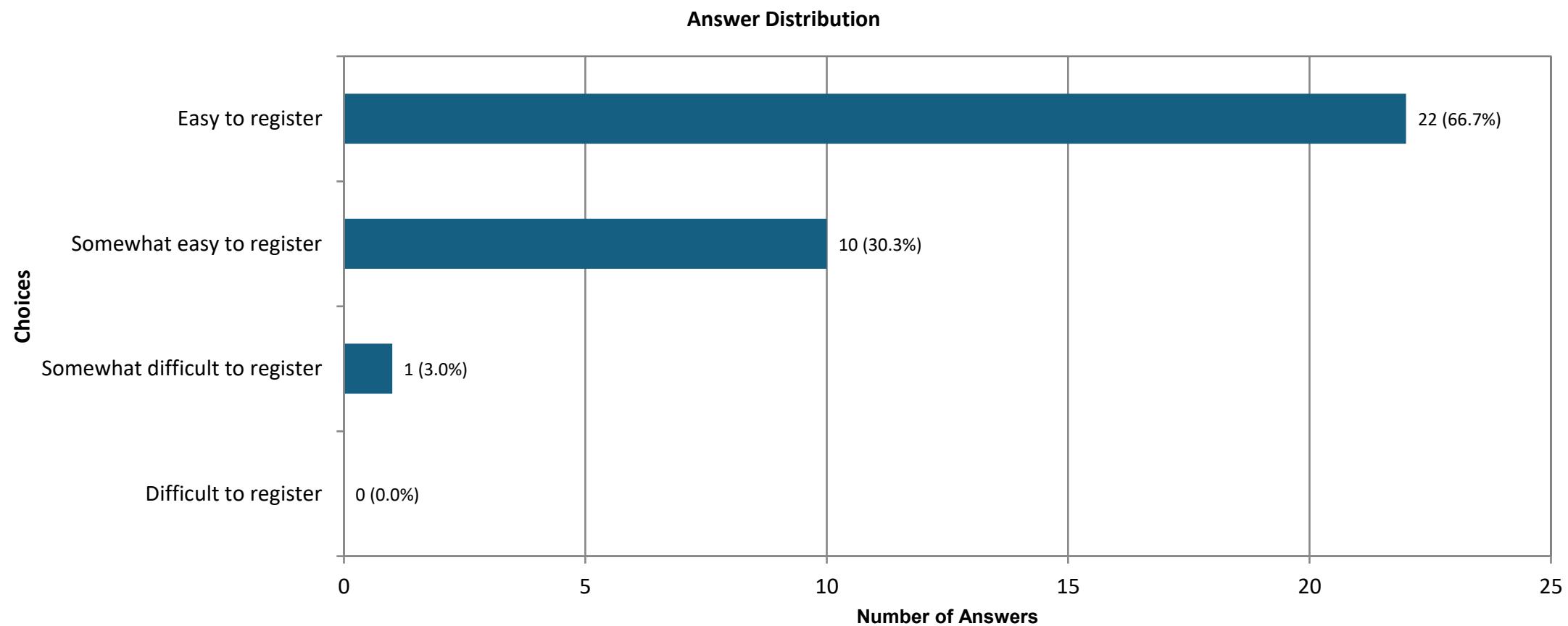
Attachment

# Feedback Survey of Focus Group Participants

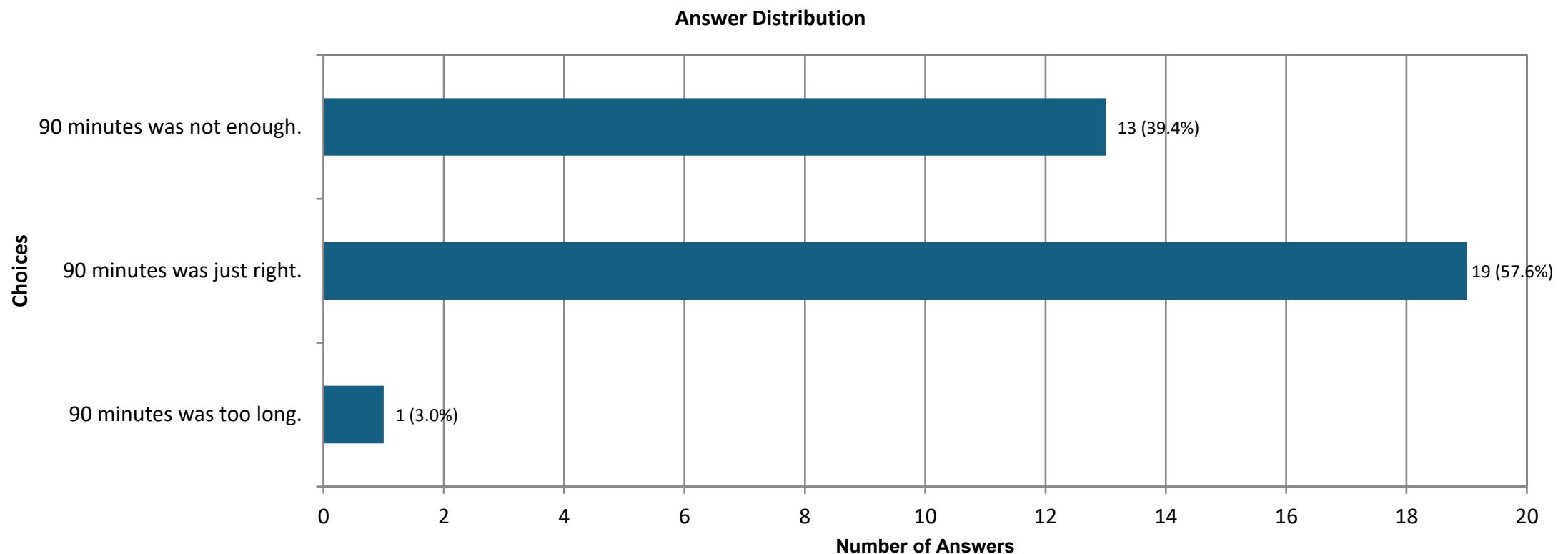
Conducted January 13-18, 2026

N = 33 (out of 69)

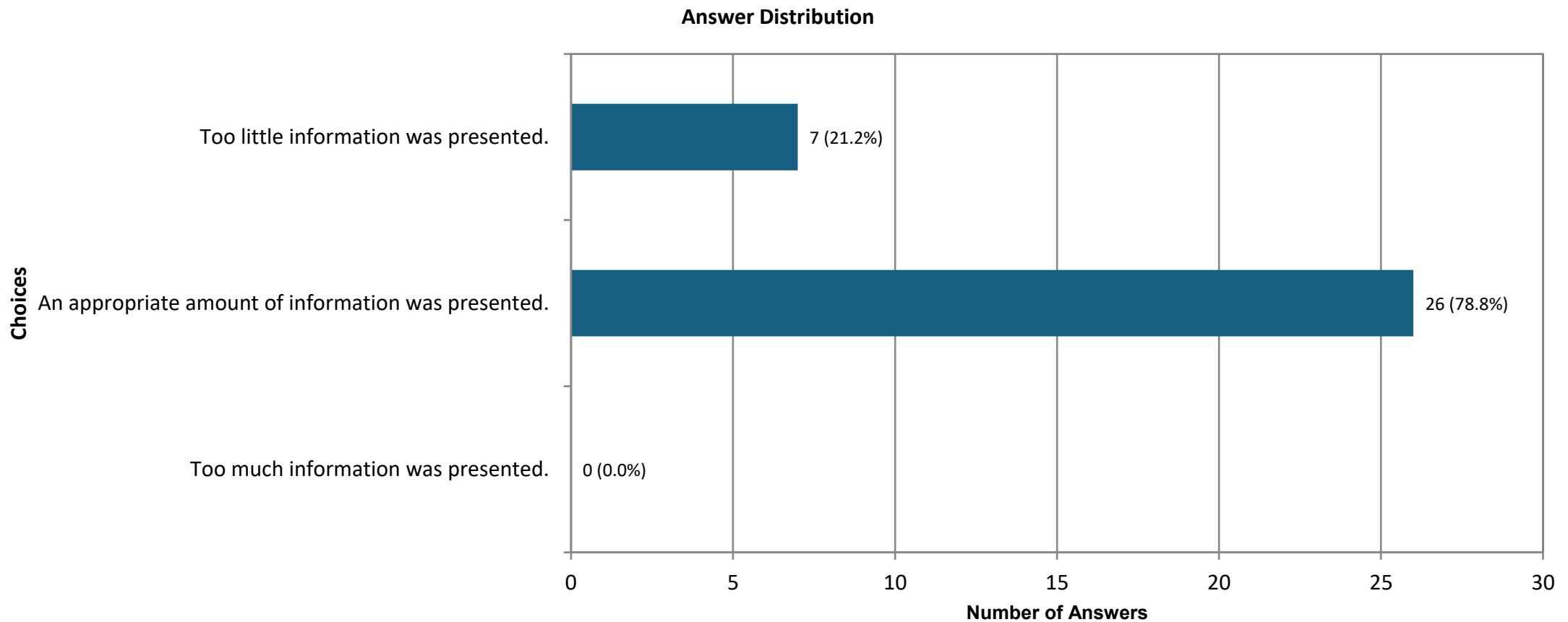
# 1. Please rate the focus group registration process



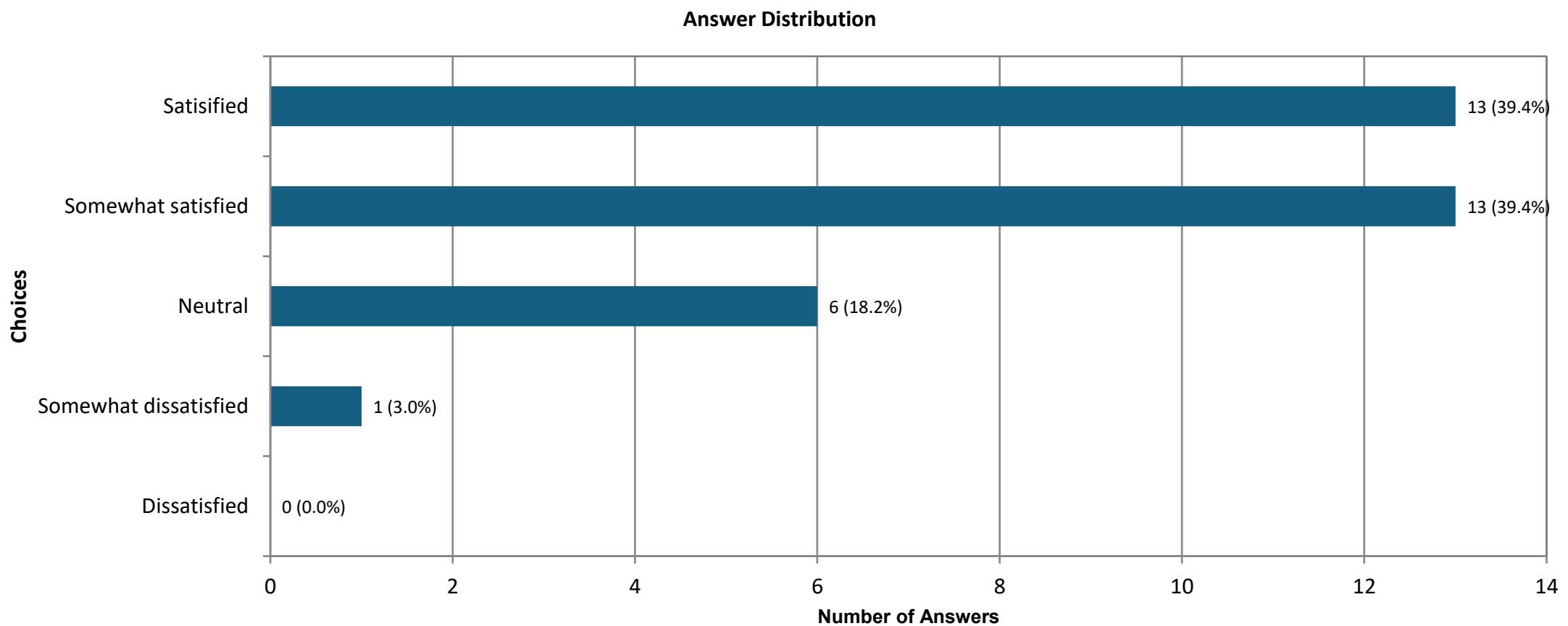
## 2. Was 90 minutes an adequate amount of time to learn about the background of the *Professional Governance Act* and engage in a comprehensive discussion?



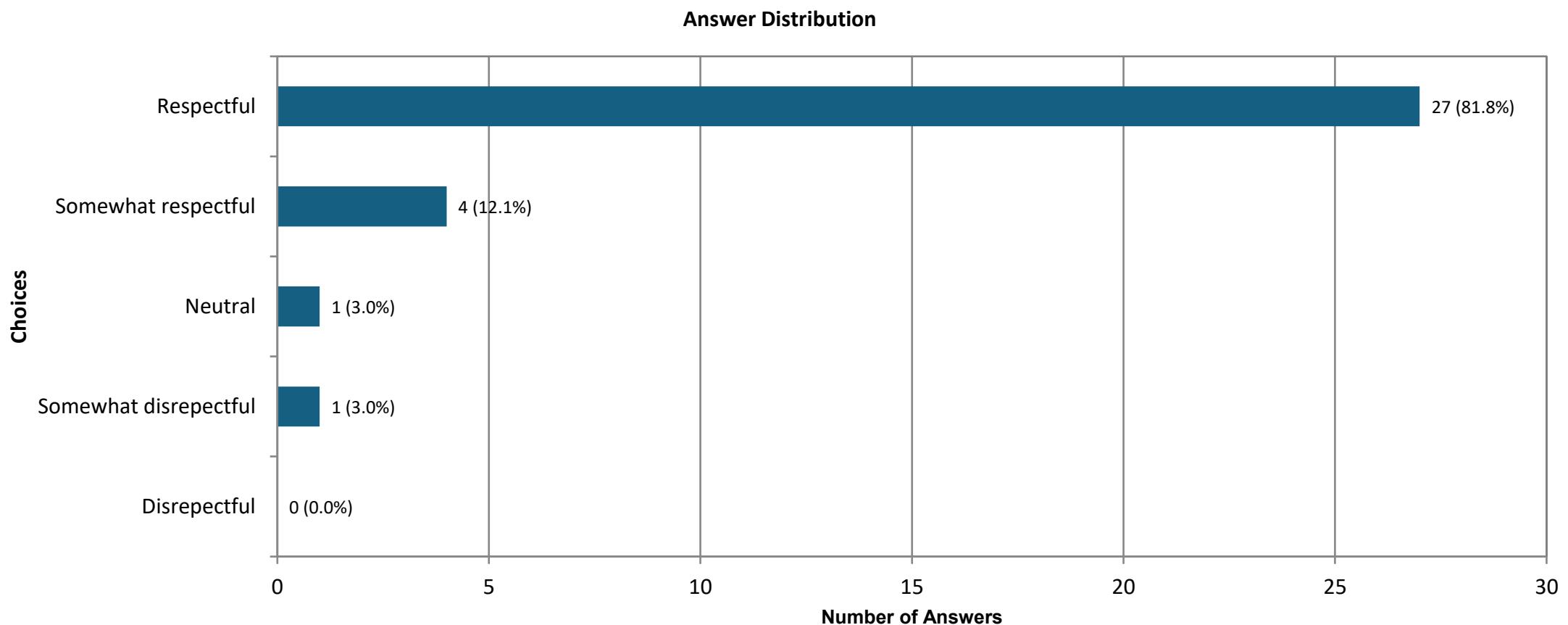
### 3. Please rate the facilitator's overview presentation about the project and the *Professional Governance Act*.



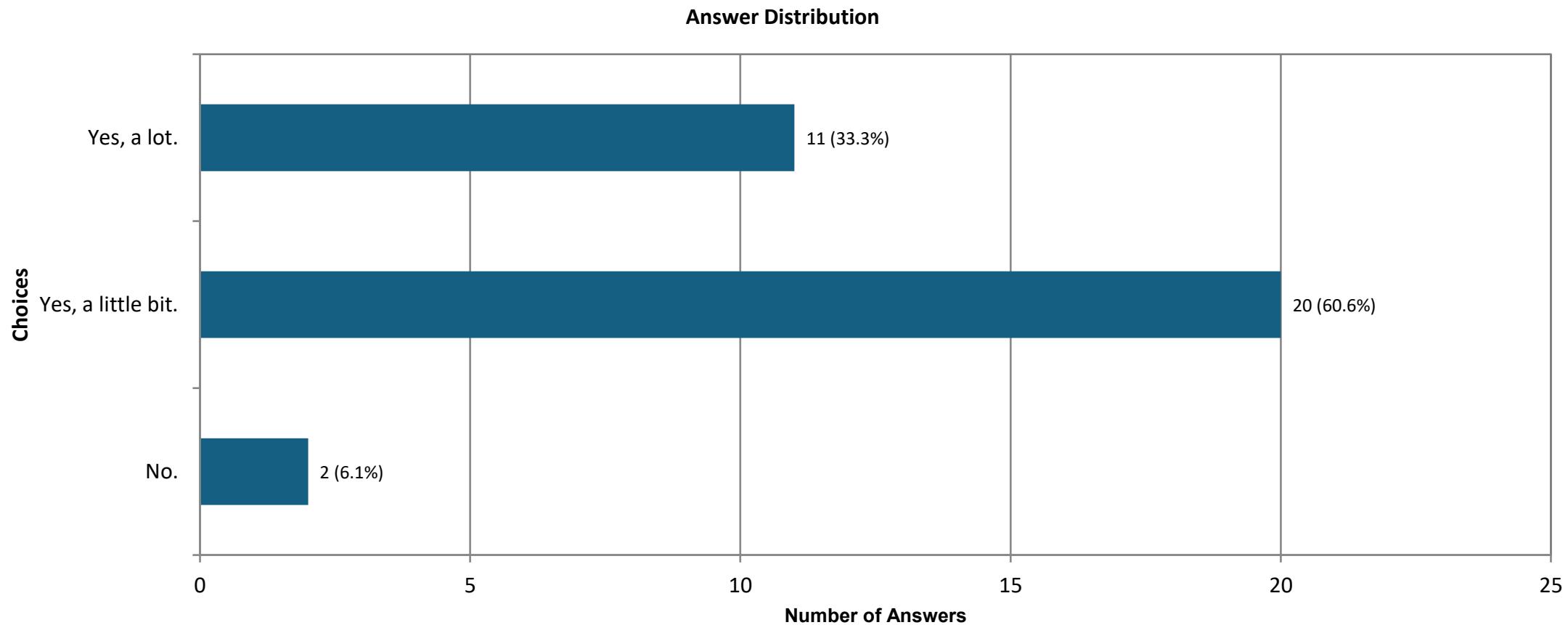
#### 4. How satisfied were you with the facilitator's role in guiding the focus group discussion?



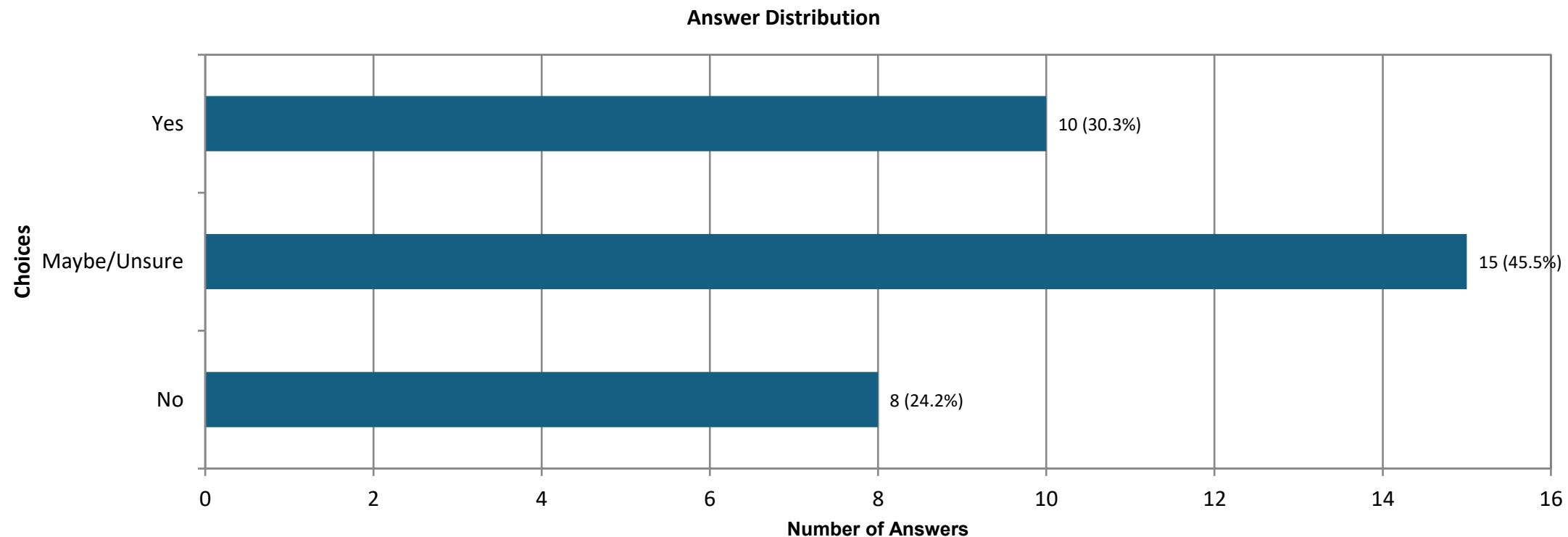
## 5. Thinking about your focus group, how would you rate the level of respectfulness of the discussion?



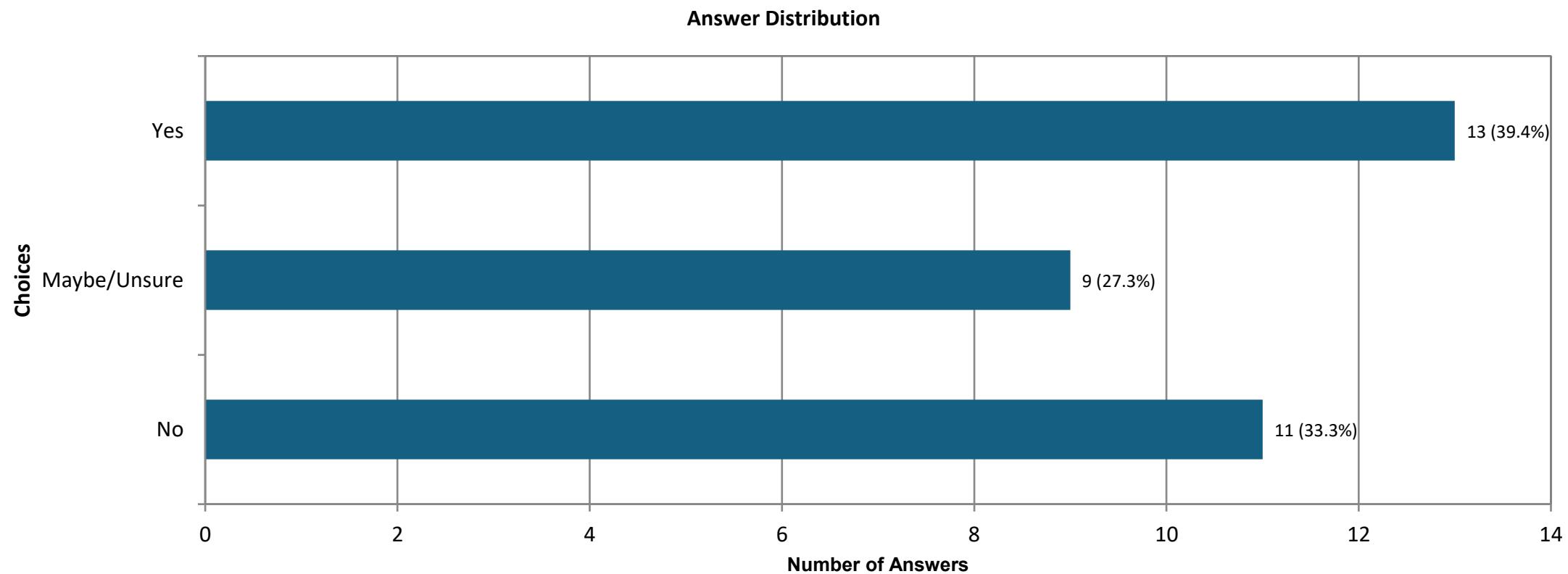
## 6. Thinking about your focus group, did you gain new perspectives from other participants?



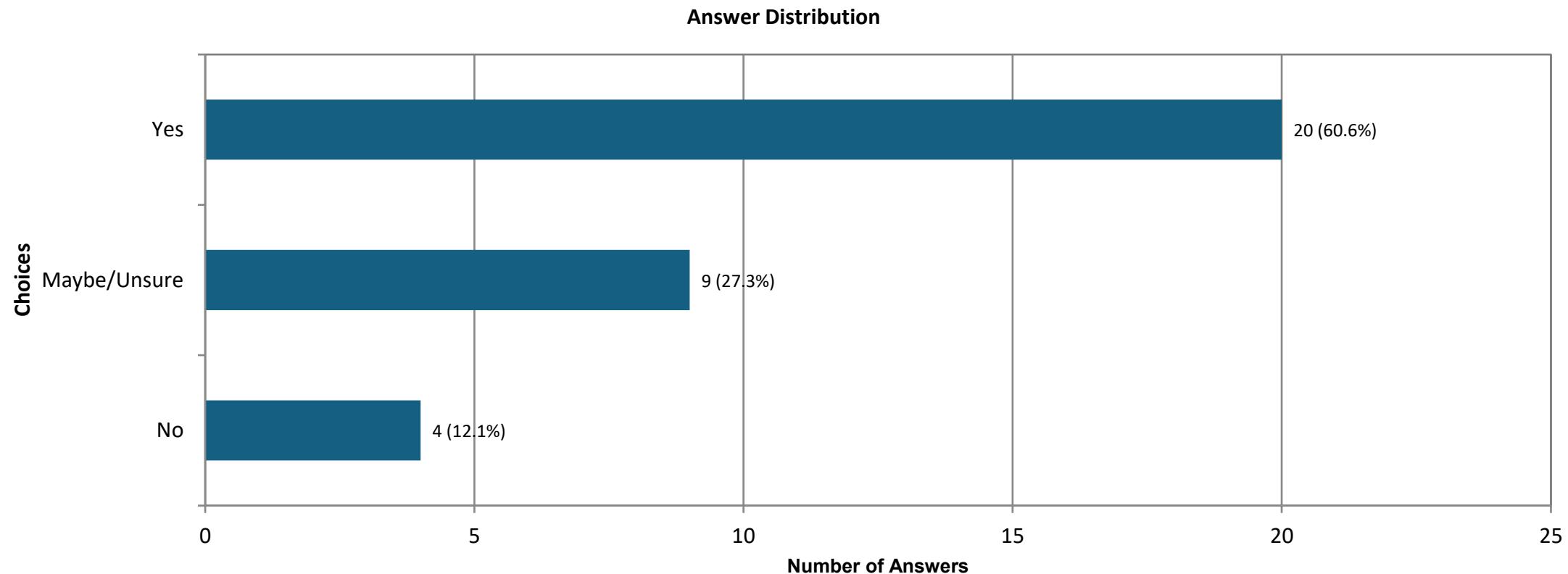
7. Did the facilitator's questions cover all of the issues that were most important to you in regards to professional governance and implications for the planning profession?



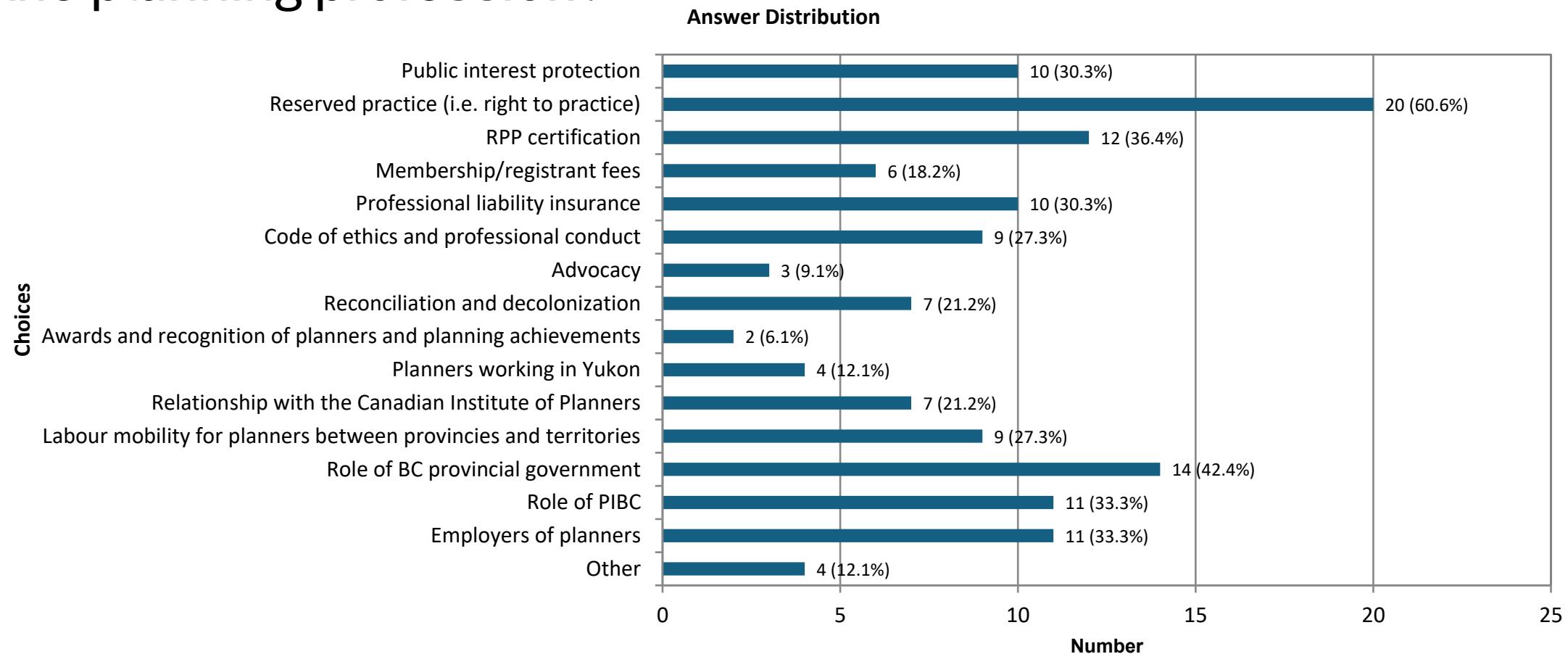
## 8. Would it have been helpful to have a subject matter expert available to answer technical questions, even if it meant less time for dialogue between participants?



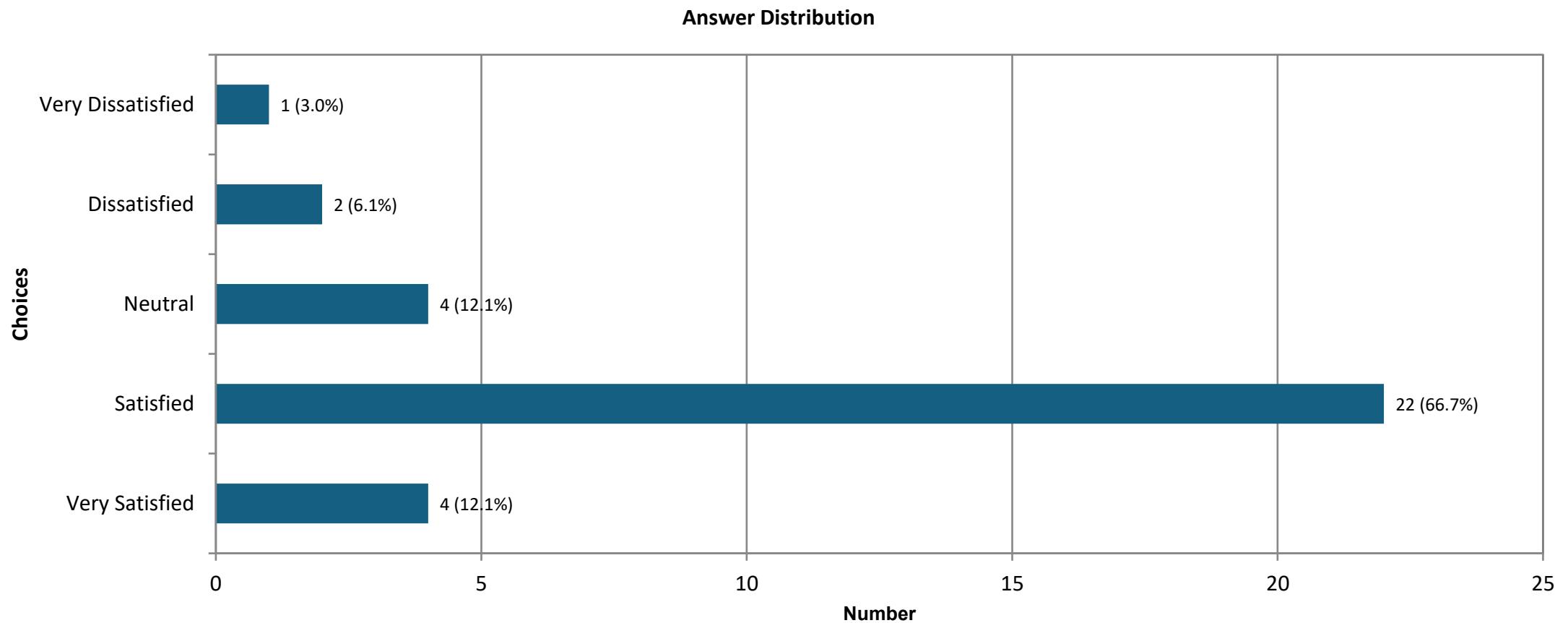
9. Did your participation in the focus group improve your understanding of the pros and cons of the *Professional Governance Act* with respect to the planning profession?



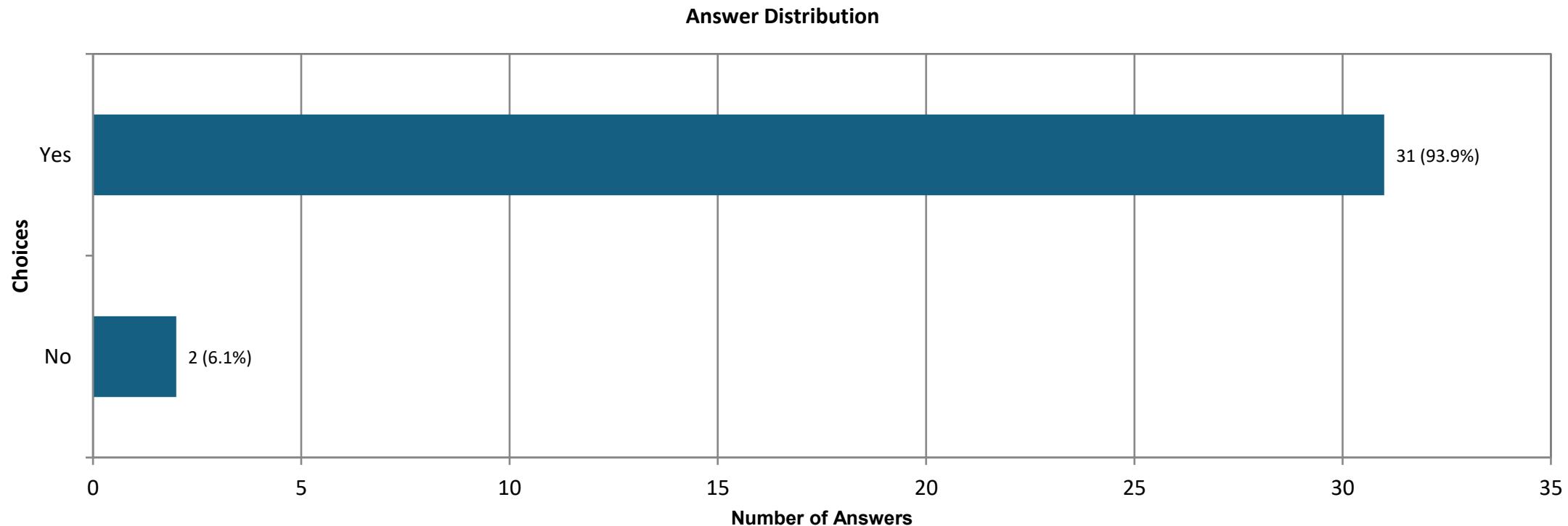
# 10. Do you need more information and/or dialogue about any of the topics below in order for you to fully understand the pros and cons of the *Professional Governance Act* with respect to the planning profession?



# 11. On balance, please score your overall level of satisfaction with the focus group.



12. If PIBC were to convene focus groups in the future on the topic of professional governance, would you recommend to your colleagues or professional planning network to participate?



### 13. What other thoughts, ideas, questions, and/or concerns do you wish to share with PIBC about your experience in the focus group?

1. Understanding the impacts on planners in Yukon, outside of BC's legislative context
2. Facilitator should have more background in the subject matter
3. I would recommend participation (see question 10) purely to get a front row seat to all these shenanigans.
4. There wasn't quite enough time for in depth discussion. I think I only spoke once. 2 hrs or a smaller group May have been better
5. There was some power dynamics at play in my session...I was in the same group as a former boss with a very big personality. I struggled with feeling comfortable voicing a dissenting opinion, given the differences in our age, gender, years of experience.
6. More information and contact info
7. Liked getting to hear perspectives of remote community planners
8. Anything inaccurate from the participants should be addressed as part of the synthesis and reporting out of the focus group outcomes
9. After a participant provided a view, one of the participants, who had a lot more experience in this matter, promptly providing an opposing view, which led to other like minded participants to model their behaviour and piling on; thus, chilling those who may have a different perspective.

### 13. What other thoughts, ideas, questions, and/or concerns do you wish to share with PIBC about your experience in the focus group?

10. Overall I enjoyed the focus group experience. I did find my group was too large and it would have been helpful to have some material to review before hand.
11. While the discussion was constructive overall, it did feel like the conversation was steered towards how the Professional Governance Act should be implemented, rather than considering whether we do/do not want to act to apply to our profession. Perhaps some of the questions could be re-framed to be more neutral rather than pushing the idea that the act will be implemented down the line?
12. Since participants come from a variety of backgrounds and work environments as well as years of experience it is important that participants start the focus group from a common starting point on the specific objectives of the focus group and any unique circumstances that need to be considered. For example the Yukon was originally part of AIPC and now PIBC. It is not clear how the proposed BC legislation would apply to Yukon planners unless there is some sort of cooperative interjurisdictional agreement. It was not clear to me if the BC government had initiated any such discussions.
13. I really enjoyed the focus group. There were interesting perspectives - it was nice to have some of my own concerns be validated by the opinions of others.
14. I think the main concern about the current process not just the FGs is the lack of the depth of understanding about PIBCs and MCIPs responsibilities to protect the PI. Hard to define but most of us know it when we see it (stolen from a Supreme Court of Canada decision).
15. I believe a key reality is that planners are not approving entities like architects- we make recommendations that then Council considers, in the public sector. This might be a good thing in the private sector although I experience more unsanctioned behaviour in public sector.

### 13. What other thoughts, ideas, questions, and/or concerns do you wish to share with PIBC about your experience in the focus group?

16. The focus group facilitator opened with a land acknowledgement, which was inappropriate given the inherently political subject matter of professional regulation. In future, this should not occur.
17. The focus group had a good balance of members that I believe were reflective of our membership at large.
18. in the discussion I took part in, the participants focused their comments on how the changes could affect other people (not themselves). it would have been more helpful to have people speak from how it would affect them personally - and what would help/hinder/affect them personally in their careers/roles/organizations. And have the facilitation team actively recruit participants from other backgrounds/locations/income levels/career level etc. to provide feedback from their own experiences.
19. The fundamental issue that planning is being left behind by other professions that under currently under the PGA. Planning needs to evolve and it does not seem like that is occurring.
20. It wasn't clear from the facilitator that this would be imposed. She presented it as a choice PIBC could make. In a webinar about this with a lawyer, we learned it might be a directive to us from the province. Seems like that's an important piece of information.

## 14. What other thoughts, ideas, questions, and/or concerns do you wish to share with PIBC about the Professional Governance Research & Engagement Project?

1. Examples of where 'right to practice' would have protected the public good. If 'right to practice' helps to fulfill planners' obligations to the public good then we have a responsibility to pursue that.
2. Godspeed.
3. I think it's good to look into this - informing members and getting our thoughts - before putting the question to the membership. There is a lot to learn and my mind is changing as a result.
4. Very concerned that prof governance will further limit diverse perspectives in planning and discourage specialists in environmental or social issues, pushing the profession into a narrow focus on development permitting.
5. To address the concern of the issue noted above, perhaps ask everyone to provide their perspective first without interference or interruptions from others before asking for pros and cons.
6. I came away from the session more committed to the idea that professional planners should not be part of the Professional Governance Act. The idea of reserved practice is abhorrent to me. I also found some of the comments from fellow planners in the previously undertaken survey to be disheartening and poor form.
7. I think the Yukon relationship to the BC legislation needs to be thought through upfront. The only way a North of Sixty type region could work is if the three territories became their own region but it would be difficult and expensive to operate given the distance involved and the actual membership size

## 14. What other thoughts, ideas, questions, and/or concerns do you wish to share with PIBC about the Professional Governance Research & Engagement Project?

8. Why is PIBC seeking this in one province for this profession? Are similar discussions happening at the CIP level and/or across Canada at the provincial level? What about unanticipated outcomes?
9. I think it would be great if head office could send out some FAQs on this topic. I served on the Professional Conduct Review Committee for 6 years and very few complaints were whistleblower type complaints and almost all were made by members of the public sometime aggrieved by a reasonable decision and only occasionally by a "Wow that was an "unprofessional" set of circumstances"
10. PIBC is spending too much time, money and staff resources on this initiative. I am strongly opposed to changing from a society and want council to terminate the process after receiving the consultant's report. There was zero interest in pursuing this further from everyone of the members of my focus group., including a First Nations member who said they will immediately resign if this is implemented.
11. Despite repeated mention of "PIBC hasn't decided on which direction to take" overall sentiment is that this is going to happen. I am curious how PIBC is going to present the input from members and reflect that on the final decision.
12. It is clear there is a division among planners within PIBC on whether to consider request to fall under the PGA or not. PIBC need to be more transparent about the divide within the profession and the implications of this divide.
13. I shared them for the webinar and they weren't address. So that was annoying. How are we defining planning???